Energy. The modalities of the agreements, plans for investment including private investment will be worked out after the amendments are approved by parliament.

Maintenance and Reconstruction of Existing Power Projects

283. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) what steps have been taken or are being taken by Government to improve the maintenance and re-construction of the various existing power projects for power generation during the year 1997;

(b) what support are Government giving or plan to give to SEBs to pull them out of their present sickness;

(c) what targets have been fixed for production of additional poweer and the steps to be taken to achieve the targets during the current year; and

(d) what is the cost per MW of power generation from various sources in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH): (a) The Central Government has been emphasizing to the State Governments and other utility owners to improve the utilisation of their existing assets and has, in this context, urged them to adopt improved operation and maintenance practices as well as undertake an extensive renovation & modernisation programme.

(b) With a view to improving the physical and financial health of the SEBs. Government of India has been extending to them a variety of support services. Power Fifnance Corporation, a Central Government financial institution for the power sector, is extending loans to SEBs for their projects. To improve the physical performance of their generation facilities, the Government of India has been assisting them in timely procurement of adequate quantities of fuel and other inputs. SEBs are also being given a variety of technical services by Central Electricity Authority. The Central Government has also been urging all the State Governments to undertake a major restructuring of their SEBs and the electricity industry in general in their States as to improve the commercial viability of their operations.

(c) A gencation target of 429 Billion Units (BUs) has been fixed for 1997-98 as against 400 BUs for 1996-97. With a view to assisting the SEBs to achieve these enhanced targets, a short term plan of action viz. Programme for Accelerated Generation. Evacuation and Refurbishment (PAGER) has been initiated by the Government. The programme envisages concerted action to tackle the problems of fuel supply, coal, oil and other liquid fuels, its transportation, adoption of better plant level practices and to improve the liquidity for identified power stations. An inter-Minsiterial Groups has also been set up for rendering assistance to the States/ SEBs for monitoring of their efforts and results.

(d) The average capital cost per MW of recently cleared power projects by Central Electricity Authority is Rs. 3.1 Cr. for a Combined Cycle Gas Turbine station and Rs. 4.3 Cr. for a coal based station. For hydcl power stations, the per MW capital cost varies between Rs. 4 Cr. and Rs. 7.5 Cr. depending upon the site selected.

Rural Electrification during the 9th Five Year Plan period

284. SHRI AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total amount earmarked for electrification of rural areas during the Ninth Five" Year Plan period;

(b) what is the number of villages likely to be provided with the electricity